

*For Speech
(2 letters)*

Art

May 9, 1968
2905 Halcyon Ave.
Baltimore, Md. 21214

*Plus
Rockefeller*

Governor Spiro T. Agnew
Governor's Mansion
Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Governor Agnew:

I have a dual purpose in writing you; firstly, to make a few belated comments on your famous (or infamous, as some would have it!) April 11th statement to the civil rights leaders, and, secondly, to relate this statement to the soul-searching you are undergoing in trying to choose between Mr. Nixon and Mr. Rockefeller as the presidential nominee of your party.

I have read your speech several times, and I am in agreement with most of the things you said. You were on firm ground when you attacked and repudiated the advocates of violence and extremism of both races. You eloquently defended the role of law and adherence thereto in our society. You wisely reminded us that much progress has been made in assuring the Negro equal opportunity while conceding that this goal has not been fully reached. You sagely pointed out what no politician of the liberal establishment would have had the nerve to mention, viz, "This country does not guarantee that every man will be successful..."

So much of your speech was so good, so clear, so honest, that it is unfortunate that its effectiveness was vitiated by your carping attack on the moderate black leaders who comprised your audience. Doubtless these leaders have been less than zealous in repudiating black extremists (with some notable exceptions such as Senator Mitchell), but you had a duty to try to understand the grave problem these people face in seeking to hold on to their leadership in the black ghettos. The abrasive effect of your speech would have been prevented had you avoided these remarks. You should instead have magnanimously commended these leaders as well as ordinary black people who used their influence to discourage the disorders, disorders that would have had a greater magnitude had it not been for the efforts of many in the black community itself. You should have shown an awareness of the fact that it requires a high order of citizenship and a special brand of courage to face an inflamed mob with appeals to "cool it". In this connection your statement had a certain niggardly quality.

I think, sir, that you have recognized the shortcomings of this public utterance, for soon thereafter you

indicated a willingness to reestablish communication with the moderate black leaders. Moreover you have expressed a readiness to meet with black militants as well, provided they will repudiate violence. This is eminently proper. Intransigence here would not do, for if avenues of dialogue and amelioration are forever closed the pernicious doctrine of violence would indeed be justified, whereas if a peaceful way under law is available for the redress of grievances and the militants refuse to accept it they will tend to lose a substantial part of the support they have among black citizens.

And now we come to a fascinating discovery: even if your speech had been modified to conform to what I have broadly suggested and to what your own discernment has no doubt tardily intimated to you you would have had a damned good speech, but one, under the same circumstances, Mr. Rockefeller would never have made! His speech, one can be sure, would have contained "nebulous promises and rationalizations and possibly a light endorsement of the Kerner report." Your "modified" speech would have been a Nixon-type speech, and this leads me to conclude that you would feel more at home with Mr. Nixon running for president than Mr. Rockefeller. My careful analysis of your speech juxtaposed with speeches by Mr. Nixon on the same theme leads ineluctably to the conclusion that Mr. Nixon is more nearly "your kind of man" than Mr. Rockefeller.

You were, of course, in the vanguard of those leaders of your party who urged Mr. Rockefeller to run, and had he taken up the opportunity forthrightly and manfully entered the primaries you would be under a moral obligation to stick with him. But his on-again, off-again, on-again stance has taken you off the horns of a dilemma: you may now in good conscience come out for Mr. Nixon. The only valid reason I can think of for you to endorse Mr. Rockefeller instead of Mr. Nixon would be if you thought the former could be elected and the latter couldn't.

Let us examine this for a moment. If this were a valid reason for picking Rockefeller over Nixon then the former should by all means be nominated, for a political party should always and quite correctly try to pick a winner to head the ticket. I will not argue that Rockefeller could not be elected. What I am taking issue with is the thesis that Nixon is a "born loser". This is a myth perpetrated in large measure by liberals who never forgave Nixon for his role in the exposure of Alger Hiss. It is a myth perpetuated by the same liberal coterie that solomnly wrote the GOP off as finished after the Goldwater defeat of 1964. It is a myth not supported by the facts.

indicated a willingness to reestablish communication with the moderate black leaders. Moreover you have expressed a readiness to meet with black militants as well, provided they will repudiate violence. This is eminently proper. Intransigence here would not do, for if avenues of dialogue and amelioration are forever closed the pernicious doctrine of violence would indeed be justified, whereas if a peaceful way under law is available for the redress of grievances and the militants refuse to accept it they will tend to lose a substantial part of the support they have among black citizens.

And now we come to a fascinating discovery: even if your speech had been modified to conform to what I have broadly suggested and to what your own discernment has no doubt tardily intimated to you you would have had a damned good speech, but one, under the same circumstances, Mr. Rockefeller would never have made! His speech, one can be sure, would have contained "nebulous promises and rationalizations and possibly a light endorsement of the Kerner report." Your "modified" speech would have been a Nixon-type speech, and this leads me to conclude that you would feel more at home with Mr. Nixon running for president than Mr. Rockefeller. My careful analysis of your speech juxtaposed with speeches by Mr. Nixon on the same theme leads ineluctably to the conclusion that Mr. Nixon is more nearly "your kind of man" than Mr. Rockefeller.

You were, of course, in the vanguard of those leaders of your party who urged Mr. Rockefeller to run, and had he taken up the opportunity forthrightly and manfully entered the primaries you would be under a moral obligation to stick with him. But his on-again, off-again, on-again stance has taken you off the horns of a dilemma: you may now in good conscience come out for Mr. Nixon. The only valid reason I can think of for you to endorse Mr. Rockefeller instead of Mr. Nixon would be if you thought the former could be elected and the latter couldn't.

Let us examine this for a moment. If this were a valid reason for picking Rockefeller over Nixon then the former should by all means be nominated, for a political party should always and quite correctly try to pick a winner to head the ticket. I will not argue that Rockefeller could not be elected. What I am taking issue with is the thesis that Nixon is a "born loser". This is a myth perpetrated in large measure by liberals who never forgave Nixon for his role in the exposure of Alger Hiss. It is a myth perpetuated by the same liberal coterie that solomnly wrote the GOP off as finished after the Goldwater defeat of 1964. It is a myth not supported by the facts.

Nixon was almost elected in 1960, he contributed more than any other leader of your party to the renaissance of 1966 by his vigorous and effective campaigning. He has been running very well in the primaries this year. And this year is especially propitious for once and for all laying this myth to rest, for Nixon alone can provide a meaningful alternative to whomever the Democrats nominate. The three main contenders in that party are extreme liberals. If Rockefeller is nominated the voters will have a "choice" between two big-spending liberals, so that many of them will stay home and many others will vote for the racist, Wallace. Nixon, on the other hand, is a sound, experienced middle-of-the-road politician who could unify his party and lead it to victory. He would win. Make no mistake. For the mood of the country is not one of support of bigger doses of big government, big spending liberalism than we have already suffered from.

You may think from the tone of my letter that I am a conservative member of your party. Such is not the case. (If I were I might have written with some sympathy of Mr. Reagan, but I have not even deigned to mention him as I consider him an ultra-conservative who couldn't win, and who is too lightweight besides.) I am a Democrat, a steelworker, a voter who tries to think of what is best for his country, a good union member but one who spurns the pressure of his union leadership to vote 100% for liberals, a person for whom the party label is secondary—a "swing" voter, in short, of which there are a growing number. Paradoxically I recognize the need for large numbers of citizens to have party loyalty if a strong two-party system is to be maintained.

One of the most significant sociological phenomena of recent times has been the transition of important segments of the industrial proletariat of both races into the middle class. This new middle class is the most crucial voting group in the nation. Domestically it is concerned about the permissiveness that afflicts every facet of our national life like a cancerous growth; it is concerned about the excessive solicitude for the First Amendment and the downgrading of the Fourth Amendment; it is worried about the almost rampant inflation and the gold drain. In foreign affairs it is concerned about the continuing threat of Communist aggression despite the fact that this threat is no longer monolithic; it senses a need for greater allied participation in meeting this threat. In both domestic and foreign areas Nixon is clearly the man who by experience and orientation is best equipped to deal with the myriad problems in such a way that we can have peace (or some measure of peace) without appeasement or national dishonor and prosperity without inflation and uncontrolled federal restrictions.

So, governor, I hope that soon you will endorse Mr. Nixon. As one of the early Rockefeller supporters you have received considerable national publicity, so if you would come out for Nixon this would give an electrifying psychological boost to his fight for the nomination. Such a move on your part could very well give Mr. Nixon the nomination on the first rather than the second ballot.

In closing I would like to say that I am not so brash as to think that an obscure private citizen such as myself can greatly influence you to come out for Mr. Nixon. This is a decision you must and will make on the basis of your own cogitations. But for what they are worth I did want to throw out these thoughts in the slight hope that they may help tip the scales for the man I think will best serve the national interest. And should you decide in favor of Mr. Rockefeller for this I would consider you no less an honorable man motivated no less by what you consider to be the national interest than you would be were you to follow what I herein suggest.

Yours Truly,

Clifford C. Miller, Jr.

Clifford C. Miller, Jr.

RECEIVED

JUN 12 1968

EXECUTIVE

DEPT

June 4, 1968

Mr. Clifford C. Miller, Jr.
2905 Halcyon Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21214

JUN 18 1968

Dear Mr. Miller:

Thank you for your thoughtful and articulate letter.

Certainly, the events of the past months have had a profound impact upon my political thinking. I believe that, within the week surrounding the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, the country suffered a series of convulsive shocks that have affected the American mind more deeply than the sum of political consequences over the past five years.

I know that I have come away with new insights and new doubts. I am willing to keep an open mind, to hear new ideas, and to view new and old faces in a different light. You cannot see your cities burned before your eyes and not expect to question deeply and, perhaps, to change.

This experience has been reflected politically in my decision to accept a Favorite Son candidacy. In the past I have opposed the Favorite Son play as an artificial device to postpone an inevitable decision. Yet, there are times when delay is justified and this is one of those times. Too much has happened too quickly to force a decision.

Maryland's delegation can go to the Republican National Convention united in the knowledge that our Party's choice for a Presidential candidate is between two good men. While I have advocated Rockefeller in the past, I have never downgraded the abilities of former Vice President Nixon. Further, you are correct in perceiving that my views in the past weeks most closely coincide with Nixon's positions. I readily admit that I have been most enthusiastic about his recent statements on urban problems and campus rebellions.

1200K 12
Mr. Miller:
Bellevue, Wash 98003
5802 Hatcher Avenue
Mr. Clifford C. Miller, Jr.

1200K 12

- 2 -

June 4, 1968

However, I am not prepared to endorse either candidate nor to pave the way for an internecine conflict in the Republican Party. By August we will know more about the minds and the minds of those men. Right now, I believe our first concern should not be personality but the development of a responsible and creative Party platform. Correct principle and policy are the keys to winning this election.

Again, may I express my appreciation for your letter and my hope that you will become an active partner in our campaign for the Presidency.

Sincerely,

STA:CMR:lhv